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151651Z Jun 06

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 004095

SIPDIS

FROM USMISSION UNESCO PARIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EU](#) [UNESCO](#)

SUBJECT: UNESCO-DISCUSSION OF ROTATION CAUSING CONSTERNATION

11. (SBU) Summary: Sharing worries about a threat to the status quo and the potential of a "rogue" proposition rising to open discussion and a possible vote, key donor nations from several electoral groups met for the first time to discuss their views on rotational representation on UNESCO bodies. The consensus was that a potential danger exists if any proposal from the "informal contact group" on rotation organized by the General Conference President is permitted to reach the Executive Board. A vote by smaller nations, unified to seek greater representation on the Executive Board, would likely succeed, turning out major donor states. Resentment is also growing again the EU's heavy-handed policy of embedding ambassador's from non Executive Board member states into the delegations of EU members on the Board. End Summary.

12. (U) Japanese Ambassador to UNESCO Sato held an informal "consultation" on the subject of rotation with Ambassadors from Russian, Brazil, India, France, and representatives from the United States, and China in his Miollis offices on June 8.

13. (SBU) French Ambassador Gueguinou made the first comment, saying that each geographic electoral group must find solutions for itself. He indicated that, of course, France wants to be present permanently on the Executive Board, and later told DCM Koss that he anticipated a "clean slate" in 2007 and no problems for French or US re-election in 2007.

14. (SBU) DCM Koss stated clearly that it would be premature for the United States to discuss rotation as we had just finished a 20-year rotation off the board.

15. (SBU) Russian Ambassador Kalamonov said that the principle of rotation will kill all committees. Using the United States as an example, he said that not having the US elected to the International Hydrological Committee, when it clearly provides most of the expertise, is ridiculous. Regarding the Executive Board, he said that it is important to maintain the status quo.

16. (SBU) Brazil's Ambassador, Macedo Soares, said it was noteworthy that the President of the General Conference, Oman's, Musa Bin Hassan, who has over 20 years experience at UNESCO, chose to convene an "informal contact group" on the subject of rotation. The Ambassador said that the chairman's decision was intended to send a message and was not the result of a lack of judgment or inexperience. Others described the Omani as "committed to the principle" of rotation, and noted that he has the small states unified behind him on the issue.

17. (SBU) The Brazilian Ambassador said that the danger is that this informal group could potentially put "something on the table," though he doubted the President would permit it to get that far. On the issue of rotation, he said that if the electoral Groups start making formal rules, it could set precedents for the other Groups. He went on to say that within Group III (Lat Am/Caribbean) the decision to split the Group into two parts for voting was an unfortunate choice and has made things difficult.

18. (SBU) The Indian Ambassador said that within Group IV, there was a debate on the issue of rotation, but no meeting of the minds. She said that a large number of the countries were opposed to rotation. She added that there is no benefit in forcing a rotation on states that have already proven their credentials in the organization.

19. (SBU) She expressed concern that if the General Conference President's "informal group" came up with a "fait accompli" and forced a vote on rotation it would be dangerous, because they would win. She again reiterated that it is imperative that the contact group not come up with a decision, because it will be adopted. She finished her remarks by saying that we face a potentially dangerous period ahead, as others will try to force the issue.

110. (SBU) French Ambassador Gueguinou agreed, saying that the electoral groups must decide for themselves on the subject of rotation. He added that in the case of the UK and Germany (which have decided to rotate between themselves on the Executive Board) that their agreement is one only between the two countries and does not bind the other group members in any way.

111. (SBU) Indian Ambassador Mukherjee said that their decision, in fact, strengthens the hand of those who say there should be two-year

term limits. When the Indian Ambassador asked if there was a gentlemen's agreement within Group I to support the UK/German rotation, French Ambassador Gueguinou said, no, that was not the case.

112. (SBU) When the Japanese Ambassador asked if representatives from the African or Arab group should be included in future meetings, the Russian Ambassador said that the issue was too sensitive, and that he would not attend if they were invited.

113. (SBU) On a separate issue, the Russian ambassador also expressed displeasure with the EU practice of "imbedding" ambassadors from other delegations in the delegations of EU members that belong to the Executive Board. The French ambassador was clearly annoyed by the statement and refused to engage. (Comment: This issue that we reported on earlier, is clearly not going away. EU members seem to be ignoring the resentment certain states are harboring about their behavior.)

114. (SBU) Comment: Rotation is clearly a sensitive issue that big states at UNESCO are trying to dance around. All those who attended the meeting agreed that it's an issue that must be carefully managed. Brazil had a scare at last fall's General Conference when it was re-elected to the Board by a scant margin. None of the big members are anxious to see that happen again. End Comment.
OLIVER